

## Section I

# PURPOSE AND SCOPE

## INTRODUCTION

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In the early 1850s Josiah B. Grinnell, a young New York Abolitionist, heeded Horace Greeley's advice to "Go West, young man, go West." Leaving New York City for Iowa, he purchased a 160-acre tract in Poweshiek County that in 1856 was incorporated as the city of Grinnell. The new settlement's boundaries were First and Sixth Avenues and East and West Streets.

Josiah Grinnell recognized the importance of having parks in a community. When the new town was platted a full square block in its center – today's Central Park -- was set aside as a park.

The City of Grinnell has maintained its founder's understanding of the value of parks. It has grown since 1856 from a town of 160 acres to a city of over 5 square miles. Its park system now totals 143 acres, encompassing 10 parks and an outdoor swimming pool.

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The purpose of *Grinnell Master Parks Improvement Plan* is to serve as a policy document that will assist the City of Grinnell in its efforts to ensure that current and future Grinnell residents have the opportunity to participate in an acceptable range of park and recreation activities in a safe, convenient, and aesthetically pleasing environment.

The *Grinnell Master Parks Improvement Plan* has six major components:

- A **Demographics Profile** prepared by City staff to examine Grinnell's current and projected population; housing needs; and income, employment and education levels.
- A **Facilities Assessment** of Grinnell parks and outdoor recreation facilities, including condition and capacity analysis and level of service analysis; and analysis of information in a parks tree inventory conducted and maintained by community volunteers.
- A **Needs Assessment**, which examines 1) community attitudes and desires for the Grinnell park system, obtained from public input workshops and surveys conducted to gather this information, 2) park and recreation facility surpluses and shortages, and 3) future community planning as described in the 2004 Grinnell Comprehensive Plan.
- **Policy Development**, to establish a clear direction for the City's future park and recreation system. This section proposes specific policies pertaining to park uses and amenities, land acquisition, open space/natural areas, land stewardship, development costs, and operations and maintenance guidelines.
- **Plan Development**, which describes the types, locations, and number of proposed parks, greenways, trails, and green streets and methods for improving the park and recreation system. An Action Plan that organizes and sets priorities for the recommendations is also part of this section.
- **Park Master Plans**. A master plan for all parks in the current Grinnell park system except Water Works Park, based on input from community residents who attended an evening planning session for the particular park.

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